

# Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 21

September 2004

## **ARTS Triennial Certification Review**

The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) underwent its three- year certification review on August 18 and 19, 2004. The meeting was held in a conference room at Enterprise Mill on Greene Street. The participants were Carlos Gonzales, Daniel Fodera, Chetna Dixon, Latoya Jones, Vanessa Ross and Max Assisi from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Tony Dittmeier from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), GDOT officials and the ARTS staff.

On August 18, the FHWA and FTA officials led a question and answer session regarding the ARTS transportation planning process. In the evening the FHWA held a public meeting at Augusta's Municipal Building to solicit public comments. Eighteen people attended the meeting and spoke about their experience with the ARTS planning process.

On Thursday, August 19, all the participants started the day by riding in one of the Petersburg boats on an hour long cruise on the Augusta Canal. The FHWA, FTA and DOT officials were very impressed with all the improvements that had been made on the Canal with enhancement funds. The meeting ended around noon with a tour of the Canal Interpretive Center and Museum at Enterprise Mills.

FHWA and FTA will issue a certification report in the Fall.

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## **2005-2007 Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

Each year, the Georgia Department of Transportation develops a document called the STIP. The STIP contains a list of all federally funded transportation projects which are scheduled to begin during a given three-year period. The STIP currently under development includes projects scheduled to begin in fiscal years 2005, 2006 and 2007.

The first step of the STIP development involves categorizing transportation projects by their location, in rural or urbanized areas. An area with population of 50,000 or more is considered urbanized. Urbanized areas are designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Everything else is rural.

In rural areas, local governments, elected officials, citizens and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) jointly evaluate transportation needs and rank projects based on funding availability. The result of the evaluation is called the Draft Rural STIP which is organized by county and by the GDOT district office. During the same time frame the MPOs around the state develop their three-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Projects from the MPO TIPs and the Rural STIP are then combined into one document which is called the STIP.

The State Transportation Board reviewed the Draft STIP on July 14, 2004. The final STIP will be prepared after all the information is reviewed and verified and the completion of the Public Involvement Process. Over 200 public meetings have been held around the state in developing the STIP.

The final STIP will be presented to the State Transportation Board in September for their approval. Then the final STIP will be sent to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in October for their approval. For more information on the STIP please go to: [www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/plan-prog/planning/programs/draft\\_stip\\_0507/index.html](http://www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/plan-prog/planning/programs/draft_stip_0507/index.html)

## ARTS CALENDAR

Augusta meetings are usually held on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call ARCPC (706) 821-1796 to verify time and place.

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:

[http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning\\_zoning/](http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/)

### ***Central Martinez Area Study: Combining Transportation, Land Use, and Urban Design***

Columbia County and Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh Associates (TSW) will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, September 28, 2004 from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM in the Evans Government Center Auditorium on the Central Martinez Area Study.

This study has been underway since 2003 and has included two workshop meetings with stakeholders in the area. These meetings have focused on quality issues with development and the need for infrastructure improvements, including transportation related improvements, in the area. The stakeholders also had a chance to participate in a Visual Image Survey to determine what kind of development would be most appropriate in the Central Martinez Area.

The Plan's progress may be followed on TSW's website: [www.tunspan.com/martinez](http://www.tunspan.com/martinez). The site includes maps of the area and preliminary assessment studies.

Highlights of the Study are:

- Develop a focal point in the general vicinity of the West Town Shopping Center as a true town center with a mixture of uses.
- Concentrate high-density residential to the south of the proposed town center along the western side of Davis Road.
- To combat congestion in the area, reconstruct Bobby Jones Expressway to provide 4 through lanes with frontage roads along each side for local access. The facility can be constructed within the existing ROW and would allow for improvements to the streetscape.
- Marsella Avenue is recommended for realignment with the existing traffic signal at Rose Lane/Settlement Road by the Lowe's Shopping Center. This is the first phase of a possible street connection between Bobby Jones and Davis Road at the proposed town center site.
- Over 300,000 square feet of retail space and more than 1,200 residential units could be added in this area by 2013.

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, the consultant team will present three key items at this meeting:

1. Transportation Options, which will show the consultant's recommended lane and curb-cut configuration for Washington Road and estimated costs for a bridge over the rail line on Old Evans Road.
2. The revised Concept Plan, which will show future land uses, streetscape projects, and transportation improvements.
3. Town Center Plan, showing possible future building locations, streets, bicycle facilities and park space at the core of Central Martinez.

For further information, contact Tim Young with Columbia County Planning and Development (706) 312-7178 or Caleb Racicot with TSW (404) 873-6730.

### ***Air Quality Update***

Air quality in the ARTS area has been relatively good so far this year. The Augusta monitor has registered levels above the 8-hour ozone standard on only three dates: June 7<sup>th</sup> (.089), August 4<sup>th</sup> (.086) and August 19<sup>th</sup> (.087). The monitor in Jackson, SC (Aiken County) has not recorded any violations of the 8-hour ozone standard.

Aiken County and Richmond County continue to participate in the Early Action Compact Program (EAC) even though neither has been designated as an ozone nonattainment area. Under the EAC Program, as long as proactive steps are taken to clean up the air, transportation conformity and new source review requirements are deferred. To date, both counties have met all EAC milestones working in partnership with their respective state air quality agencies.

On April 15, 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the 8-hour ozone standard designations for a list of communities nationwide for the years 2001-2003. Fortunately, none of the ARTS area counties were listed as ozone nonattainment communities. EPA will make official designation of PM 2.5 (Particulate Matter) attainment and nonattainment areas by the end of 2004. At present it appears that the ARTS area will be in attainment with regard to PM 2.5 standards.

### ***CSRA Planners Group Spring Meeting***

The Spring meeting of the CSRA Planners Group was held on Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, and was hosted by Bill Owens, Planning Director of Burke County. The meeting was held at Di-Lane Plantation near Waynesboro – the “bird dog capital of the world”. A presentation on the history and current use of Di-Lane Plantation was made by John Bearden. After the presentation the group went on a walking tour of the Plantation and to visit an actual bird dog cemetery – complete with headstones of the beloved animals!

The Fall meeting of the CSRA Planners group will be in October and information about the meeting will be going out to the group very soon. Contact Terri Turner at the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission at (706) 821-1796 to join the group or for information about upcoming meetings.

### ***ARTS Long Range Plan Update***

Progress continues on the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan update. During the summer months ARTS staff compiled base year (2002) estimates of socio-economic factors for the 666 traffic analysis zones in the study area. Estimates were made of the following factors: occupied housing units, school enrollment, employment (retail, service, manufacturing and wholesale), total population and median household income.

Georgia DOT personnel will use the socio-economic estimates to update the base year travel demand model for the study area. Transportation planners at URS, Inc. will develop socio-economic projections to the year 2030, using the 2002 estimates as a starting point. Interim projections will be made for the following years: 2007, 2009, 2012, and 2020. This data will be used in the travel demand model to assess the impact of growth on the area's transportation network. The modeling will help identify the location and type of future transportation improvement projects.

For more information about the Plan update project contact Paul DeCamp, Sangeetha Rao or Stephen Strohming.



***Please Do Not Drink and Drive***

**Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission**  
**525 Telfair Street**  
**Augusta, GA 30901**

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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

**Mailing Address**  
**Street Number and Name**  
**City, State 98765-4321**

<b>OCTOBER 2004</b>
NO MEETINGS
<b>NOVEMBER 2004</b>
CAC/TCC: 10 <sup>TH</sup> , 10:00 A.M. ENDORSE DRAFT UPWP
<b>DECEMBER 2004</b>
POLICY: 2 <sup>RD</sup> , 11:00 A.M. ENDORSE DRAFT UPWP CAC/TCC: 8 <sup>TH</sup> , 10:00 A.M.

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